

What is Claimed Is:

1. An airbag apparatus comprising:
an airbag for being inflated so that one side of the airbag faces a driver of the vehicle and an opposite side faces vehicle structure;
a connecting member in the airbag for controlling inflation thereof in a predetermined manner; and
predetermined airbag connecting locations at which the connecting member is attached to the airbag with the predetermined connecting locations selected to limit travel of the one side of the airbag toward the driver and to allow substantially free travel of the opposite side of the airbag toward the vehicle structure during airbag inflation.
2. The airbag apparatus of claim 1 wherein the predetermined airbag connecting locations include one location at the one side facing the driver, and at least one other location that is displaced from the opposite side facing the vehicle structure.
3. The airbag apparatus of claim 1 wherein the connecting member includes a first connecting section that connects lateral sides of the airbag, and a second connecting section that connects the first connecting section and the one side of the airbag facing the driver.
4. The airbag apparatus of claim 3 wherein the airbag includes an engagement section having a predetermined contour provided by the connection of the airbag lateral sides via the first connecting section with the predetermined contour being adapted for engaging the vehicle structure.
5. The airbag apparatus of claim 1 wherein the connecting member has a polygonal shape so that at least one of the airbag connecting locations is an apex of the polygonal connecting member.
6. The airbag apparatus of claim 5 wherein the polygonal shape comprises a triangle formed by the connecting member in the airbag.

7. The airbag apparatus of claim 6 wherein the airbag connecting locations are three apexes of the triangular shaped connecting member.
8. The airbag apparatus of claim 1 wherein the connecting member includes a plurality of divided members that are attached to the airbag at the airbag connecting locations and that are attached to each other at locations other than the airbag connecting locations.
9. The airbag apparatus of claim 1 in combination with the vehicle with the vehicle comprising a motorcycle.
10. An airbag apparatus for a motorcycle having a seat for a driver rearwardly of handlebars, the airbag apparatus comprising:
 - an airbag for being inflated between the seat and the handlebars;
 - a connecting member in the airbag for controlling inflation thereof in a predetermined manner;
 - a forward portion of the airbag that the connecting member allows to substantially freely inflate toward the handlebars; and
 - a rearward portion of the airbag whose inflation toward the driver is regulated by the connecting member.
11. The airbag apparatus of claim 10 wherein the rearward portion of the airbag includes a rear side that faces the driver upon airbag inflation, and the connecting member is attached to the rear side of the airbag rear portion to form a concavity in the rear side adapted to receive a body portion of the driver upon occurrence of a forward collision of the vehicle.
12. The airbag apparatus of claim 11 wherein the connecting member is attached at three locations along the rear side to form three corresponding concavities therein with a central cavity for receiving the drivers head, and a cavity on each side of the central cavity for receiving the shoulders or chest of the driver.

13. The airbag apparatus of claim 10 wherein the connecting member is attached at predetermined locations to the airbag such that the airbag front portion is sized to fit between laterally spaced end portions of the motorcycle handlebars.
14. The airbag apparatus of claim 13 wherein the predetermined locations are at either lateral side of the airbag generally intermediate the front and rear portions thereof.
15. The airbag apparatus of claim 14 wherein the airbag includes concavities at the predetermined locations adapted for fitting the end portions of the handlebars therein.
16. The airbag apparatus of claim 14 wherein the connecting member includes a section thereof that extends linearly between the predetermined side locations with the connecting member section sized to approximate the lateral spacing between the end portions of the handlebars.
17. The airbag apparatus of claim 10 wherein the connecting member extends linearly generally normal to a fore and aft direction along the motorcycle to be connected at opposite lateral sides of the airbag to keep the inflated airbag stable in a lateral direction corresponding to the linearly extending connecting member as the driver engages the airbag during accident conditions.
18. The airbag apparatus of claim 10 wherein the connecting member includes a plurality of divided members attached to each other at locations spaced from the airbag to allow the length of the connecting member to be adjusted so that the predetermined manner in which the connecting member controls airbag inflation is varied.
19. A method of forming an airbag apparatus, the method comprising:
 - providing an airbag;
 - attaching a connecting member at a plurality of locations on the airbag;
 - providing a plurality of divided members of the connecting member; and
 - attaching the divided members to each other at at least one location that is not on the airbag.

20. The method of claim 19 including adjusting a length of the divided members that are attached at the location that is not on the airbag.
21. The method of claim 20 wherein the length is adjusted to substantially match that of a gap in vehicle structure through which a portion of the airbag is to be inflated.
22. The method of claim 19 wherein the connecting member is attached to the airbag prior to attaching the divided members to each other.